

Session 7: Strengthening the enabling environment

1. Goal:

To increase knowledge of participants on how to help decision-makers to introduce and adopt policy, legislation and institutional frameworks that support no-regrets adaptation strategies to climate change.

2. Learning objectives:

To have an outline on:

- What are the entry points for mainstreaming CC in the policy cycle?
- Which principles of good governance are available to address climate change manifestations?
- How to assess and improve legislation for adaptation?
- What are Key institutional requirements for effective mainstreaming?
- How to strengthen institutions and capacities?
- The role of financial aspects in adaptation to climate change

3. Key messages:

- CC is a newly introduced driver in water resources management in the Arab region. Therefore, adaptation strategies need to be embedded within existing national water policies and legislative and institutional frameworks. This means, difficult policy choices have to be made between additional capital investments or advocacy campaigns to promote behavioral changes.
- Many countries in the region are already taking actions that will help them manage the challenges of CC. The approach each has followed is specific to the context of the Country.
- The main emphasis is on improving information, strengthening institutions and devising strategies for reducing the negative impact on vulnerable population groups.
- There are several regional initiatives in the making. Among these initiatives are: the World Bank's Strategic Framework on Development and Climate Change in MENA; the NBI's Initiative to Address Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in the Nile basin; the Arab-OECD countries' new initiatives to promote investment; the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean of the Union for Mediterranean and the Strategy for Water Security in the Arab Region adopted in June 2011 by Arab Ministerial Council for Water
- Several Arab countries have been able to achieve progress over the past two decades in reforming their water sector policies, reinforcing institutions, modernizing legal frameworks, and building capacities to improve water management and services but the water sector in Arab countries, in general, still suffering from a weak governance structure due to inadequate policies and institutions.

- The capacity of institutions participating in drafting and monitoring national and local IWRM plans needs to be improved, particularly at the local level
- To improve water service efficiency and ensure accountability, the public sector has to shape new rules and regulations governing private sector participation in the water sector
- More experience and institution-strengthening measures are needed to expand public-private partnership (PPP) capacity so that it can make a real contribution to meeting the region's growing urban water service needs
- Participation must not be understood as an end in itself with the rise of organized water user groups as the final objective. Participation has to be a means of achieving joint responsibility at all levels of decision-making processes, where actors form part of the problem as well as the solution
- Access to reliable data and exchange of information remains a big constraint. Data collection and monitoring programs are conducted by a variety of authorities without co-ordination and integration; when data is available, it is not continuous, comparable, reliable, properly reported, or disclosed to the public; information on water resources management (quantity and quality) and water sector performance is considered in many instants as classified information not to be disclosed
- The crucial role of research in creating the knowledge base needed to improve water governance has not yet been sufficiently emphasized. Innovations in science and technology are needed in order to sustainably manage both conventional and nonconventional water resources
- Relevant research and development could greatly enhance the institutional capacity, improve governance performance, and reduce associated running costs. Few Arab countries have highly reputed water research centers that conduct research on water resources management.
- Progress in capacity building, training, and development of the professional skills necessary to meet current and future challenges are receiving increasing attention. Newly established regional organizations such as the Arab Water Council (AWC), the Arab Water Countries Utilities Association (ACWUA) and the Arab Water Academy (AWA) seek to promote 'good' water governance in Arab countries. They implement capacity building and training programs with priority given to policy and institutional reform, water governance, and water management.
- Improving the legal framework and the rule of law is also needed. Several states in the Arab region have begun to realize the importance of sound water legislation and have consequently taken steps either to update and modernize existing laws or to introduce new legislation and laws and strengthen institutional arrangements
- Institutional reforms need to be introduced through a participatory and consultative process, involving formal and informal arrangements, to develop understanding and ownership of the change process

4. Resources:

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